

## **2002 Annual Report Executive Summary**

### **Clinch - Powell Enterprise Community**

The Clinch-Powell Enterprise Community continues to surpass expectations as over \$79,177,508 million for projects and works of improvement was brought into the region as a result of the EC status. Over \$33,802,998 million of this was from USDA Rural Development.

The EC was designated by Vice President Al Gore on January 13, 1999 and includes all or portions of Claiborne, Grainger, Hancock, Hawkins and Union counties in East Tennessee. The Clinch-Powell Resource Conservation and Development Council serves as the lead entity and fiscal agent for the Enterprise Community: a Board of Directors from the region governs the EC. "A community of opportunity where People and Business prosper."

The Clinch-Powell Enterprise Community celebrates tremendous success to date on implementation of a Ten Year Strategic Plan put together solely based on public input. More than 1,300 citizens contributed to the Strategic Plan. Partners and agencies such as Clinch Powell Educational Cooperative, Douglas Cherokee Economic Authority, Utility Districts, School Systems, Volunteer Fire Departments and many others are directly benefiting from the designation of the EC. Most importantly, the quality of life is improving with better water, housing, education, emergency services and a brighter economic future.

Here is a brief summary of projects in 2002 listed by focus area made possible for partners with assistance from many public and private funding agencies and the Enterprise Community designation. Sustainable Economic Development Clinch-Powell Community Kitchen/ Appalachian Spring Cooperative – All Counties Clinch-Powell Revolving Loan Fund – All Counties Phipps Bend Small Business Park – Hawkins County Natural Resource Base Protection – Hancock, Claiborne, Grainger, Hawkins Counties Clinch-Powell Industrial Recruiter: · Served 10 companies and assisted in developing three business plans · Fifty-two clients were served in skill development (including 30 youth) · Total of 1,075 new jobs · \$39,000,500 in estimated capital investment Tourism "Not Barn Yesterday" barn murals completed in Grainger and Hancock Counties Education and Arts 21st Century Community Learning Center - Claiborne Safe Schools, Healthy Students – All Counties Appalachia CARES – All Counties "Not Barn Yesterday"- Community public art project in Grainger & Hancock Infrastructure Water and Waste Grants and Loans – Hawkins, Hancock, Grainger Water Feasibility Study Request for Proposals Tele-Democracy Video-Conferencing Network – All Counties Scenic By-Ways Coalition Basic Needs Single Family Housing Grants and Loans – All Counties HOME Team: three staff members received Homebuyer Education Training through Neighborhood Reinvestment Institute: Homebuyer Education Classes Basic Needs Committee designated \$74,000 to build a house in Claiborne County Quality Communities Set up Clinch-Powell Community Fund with the East Tennessee Foundation: \$5,000. Several board/volunteer trainings were given by ETF on fund raising.

The EC Board of Directors includes three voting members from each EC counties and six other non-voting members including the County Executives and a representative of the Clinch-Powell RC&D Council. The 2001-2002 Board of Directors was: Claiborne – Tom Mottern, Joyce Hopson, Frances Rasnic, Darrell Brittain Grainger – Fred Parker, Larry Fox, Dana Dalton, Michael Hammer Hancock – Steve Hodges, Kim Belcher, Leshia Cope, Michael Harrison Hawkins – Nancy Barker, Nancy Bell, Sally Dingfelder, Heiskell Winstead Union – Jane Bowman, Marie Rhyne, Kathleen Graves, Larry Lay Clinch-Powell RC&D – Marvin Hammond.

The Tele-Democracy Network is a program designed to increase civic participation through immersing information technologies. The rugged geography and long distances between towns in our area prevents

many of us from participating in both our communities and the outside world. The Tele-Democracy Network is in place to help break through these geographical barriers. We have set up 6 videoconferencing centers in Maynardville, Rutledge, Rogersville, Harrogate, Sneedville and Washburn. These videoconferencing centers allow us to hold meetings and participate in trainings and educational activities throughout our five county region. Approximately 201 people used the Tele-democracy network in 2002 by participating in thirty-three conferences. These conferences included EC board meetings, FEMA workshops for Fire Assistance Grants, Grant Writing Seminars, Grant Writing Classes (East TN State University: ETSU), Non-Profit Workshops, Volunteer Recruitment Classes, University of TN Small Business College, and Staff Training. The Tele-Democracy Network held two recent videoconferences: the ETSU History department and the Hancock County Schools held a conference to collaborate on a student-led project of recording the oral histories of veterans in Hancock County.

Website: The number of unique visitors to the site in 2002 was 9,210 visitors in 19,856 sessions. The number of hits for 2002 was 413,592 averaging 34,466 per month resulting in an increase of 6,168 per month over 2001. We recently made an addition to the web site to include our housing and homebuyer education programs. <http://www.clinchpowell.net/commsurvey.html>.

FEMA Workshops/Grants: Clinch-Powell gave instructions and information to over a dozen fire departments in the region on applying for the 2002 FEMA Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant Program. Had videoconferencing not been available, many of the Volunteer Fire Departments would not have found out how to prepare the on-line proposal in time to meet the dead line. Of the departments that attended the videoconference five VFDs in the EC were awarded grants. Thorn Hill Volunteer Fire Department in Grainger County was awarded for \$17,729, Snake Hollow VFD in Hancock County was awarded \$8,874.00, Tazewell/New Tazewell VFD in Claiborne County was awarded \$49,010.00. Stanley Valley VFD was awarded \$12,978 and Striggersville VFD was awarded \$29,726.00: both of these departments are in Hawkins County. Also awarded in the five county region were Surgoinville VFD for \$52,286.00 and Goshen Valley VFD for \$106,780.00 in Hawkins County and Cumberland Gap VFD for \$20,106.00 in Claiborne County. All of these grants had a 10% match by the department and were designated for fire fighting equipment and personal protective gear.

Economic Development: The Clinch-Powell Revolving Loan Fund was established in partnership with the First Century Bank and USDA Rural Development in 2000. The fund will provide loans of up to \$15,000 to entrepreneurs and expanding businesses in the Enterprise Community region. Rural Development has awarded a \$99,000 grant from the Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) and First Century Bank in Claiborne County has pledged \$50,000 to capitalize the loan fund. Chapel Market in Union County is the first successful entrepreneurial business to be awarded this loan. The interest rate is a blended rate: one third of the total is the bank rate (6.2% for this loan) and two thirds of the total at 4.28% (90% of prime at the time of this processing in December 2002). ATEC is a project provided by the Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority for computer-based training, business planning, and career development. There are three centers in the Enterprise Community. The three-year program is funded by the Dept. of Education.

The C-HOSTS program (Communities Helping Our Students to Succeed) of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative has been actively operating in the rural areas of upper East Tennessee since the fall of 1999 including our five counties. This three-year joint grant from the Dept of Education and the Dept of Justice is for \$2,787,000. It is sponsored by the Clinch Powell Educational Cooperative and officially ended October 31, 2002, although it continues to operate on a limited basis at a handful of schools through a no-cost grant extension. This no-cost extension expires March 31, 2003. This is partnership project that is addressing two key issues in the EC strategic plan – crime/safety and student counseling. During the course of the three years, C-HOSTS has developed strong working relationships with school administrators, teachers, students and community agencies in the five counties that it serves. C-HOSTS

hosted a series of annual summit meetings in each county that brought together school officials, law enforcement, juvenile justice leaders and community service agencies to discuss school safety, school violence and the needs of at-risk students. In addition to working with Peter Blauvelt to create physically secure school facilities, C-HOSTS placed intervention specialists in every high school and many middle schools in each county to provide direct intensive services to at-risk students. Overall, these intervention specialists provided intensive services to students on over 8,800 occasions. The students sought assistance with a range of issues including emotional/physical concerns, personal/home, school achievement, school safety and disciplinary problems. Project BASIC, a service funded by the C-HOSTS program and contracted through local mental health agencies, provided direct service to at-risk students at several elementary schools during the grant period. Since the end of the grant period, Project BASIC is now being funded at a select number of elementary schools through the Tennessee Department of Mental Health.

Clinch Powell Education Cooperative received funding from the U.S. Department of Education for a new program, Project SUCCESS in December 2003 and is tentatively funded for three years. Project SUCCESS, a CSAP model program, will be implemented at seven high-schools (6 public and 1 private) in the Clinch-Powell region in (Grainger, Hancock, Claiborne and Union Counties) to prevent and reduce substance use among high-risk, multi-problem high school adolescents while incorporating other proven one-on-one school intervention services. Intervention strategies will include prevention education, one-on-one and group counseling, coping skills, problem identification and referral, home visits and clinical services. Clinch-Powell SUCCESS will work intensively with high-risk secondary school teenagers aged 14 to 18, targeting alternative school and in-school suspension students. Prevention and intervention education activities of Clinch-Powell SUCCESS will also target high-school freshmen.

The Clinch-Powell Community Kitchens has established a shared-use commercial kitchen incubator to enable new and existing food and farm product businesses to rent the use of kitchen facilities to produce value-added food and farm products. This is a partnering project being conducted by Jubilee Project, Inc. The Kitchens project addresses high priority issues identified in the strategic plan – alternative agriculture and value-added agriculture. The Kitchens is located in a defunct school in Hancock County that has been renovated for the kitchen usage and storage as well as being used as a computer center: it serves all five counties. The EC has tentatively awarded (waiting on Environmental Review) a grant of \$15,000 to Jubilee Project to assist in purchasing the school building and land for the Kitchens.

The Appalachian Spring Co-operative was incorporated in 2002 as a group of growers, farmers, and food processors from seven counties. This group (now 29 members) has received a \$70,000 three-year grant from the Heifer Project to start beekeeping enterprises on members' farms. The cooperative also received a SARE grant of \$10,000 from the University of Georgia to provide funds for marketing products. A \$40,000 from USDA Rural Development grant was awarded for a staff position to recruit and work with farmers as ASC members, and a \$2,000 grant from Farm Bureau was given to assist in the purchase of a customized label printer and software. The Co-op has generated \$21,000 through sales of a holiday gift basket project. There is a website where products are sold on line: [www.apspringcoop.com](http://www.apspringcoop.com).

Enterprise Community Grants: Through Grants Workshops, non-profits organizations in the EC have the opportunity to network with the EC, request mini-grants for services and equipment, and to learn the basics of grant writing. The EC accepts proposals for funding under the six strategic plan focus areas in Feb, June and October. Maynardville Elementary School in Union County was awarded a 50/50 matching grant for \$2,500 for library books benefiting 750 children. Speedwell Volunteer Fire Department in Claiborne County was awarded \$3,728 for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). They serve a community of 4,200. Carter's Valley VFD was awarded \$5,000 for a foam pumper as they

respond to chemical fires in Phipps Bend Industrial Park in Hawkins County. Claiborne Fire Association was awarded \$3,000 for a Radio Repeater to assist in emergency communication for the county. There are 29,747 residents that will benefit from this as well as those driving through the county that may be involved in automobile accidents. Seventeen volunteer fire departments were awarded a total of \$38,096 from the Basic Needs Committee as a challenge grant that they matched with \$33,302.45 for the purchase of Turn-Out (Bunker) Gear for the fire fighters. A total of 88 sets of gear that included helmet, boots, gloves, pants, jacket, hood, and suspenders were purchased in bulk by the EC for a substantial savings of \$ 31,700.00 (65% less than buying per set.) The Vardy Historical Society (Melungeon History) was awarded \$5,600 for the Aunt Mahala's Cabin project that is a tourist attraction in Hancock County serving 6,786. The Jubilee Project, Inc. was awarded \$15,000 (pending RD Environmental Review) for the Clinch-Powell Kitchens building that serves farmers, growers and processors in seven counties.

**Partnerships and Alliances:** This has been one of the greatest strengths of the EC. Leveraging has been exceptional with more than \$79,177,508 million coming into the EC region since designation in January 1999. We are proud that many partner groups have benefited directly through priority consideration because their work is in the strategic plan. Partners and agencies such as Clinch Powell Educational Cooperative, Douglas Cherokee Economic Authority, Utility Districts, Schools, local governments, nonprofits and many others are directly benefiting from the designation of the EC. Most importantly, the quality of life is improving with better water, housing, education and a brighter economic future.

The Clinch-Powell EC is an active member of the Tennessee Rural Development EC/EZ Coalition that meets monthly to discuss strategies for maximizing our impact and joining forces for additional funding. Douglas Cherokee Economic Authority was awarded a \$459,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 2001 for a three-year program to provide economic services to eight rural counties in East Tennessee. The Southern Appalachian Economic Development Partnership (SAEDC) links the Clinch-Powell Enterprise Community with the SMART (Scott-McCreary counties) Enterprise Community.

The following three initiatives will be addressed by the SAEDP: · Business Retention and Attraction · Community Preparedness and Collaboration · Utilization of Internet for Economic Development  
**Accomplishments:** · Set up Economic Development Boards in each county and launched nine websites ([www.saedp.org](http://www.saedp.org)) and continued to support committees to get State of Tennessee Three Star Status in 2001-2002. · Served 22 companies with in-depth counseling (over 2 hours) and provided 8 companies with over ten hours of assistance: assisted in developing one business plan · Total of 136 new jobs · \$1,041,000 in estimated capital investment

**Problems:** The major obstacle was the slow process of getting reimbursement for EC expenditures back to the lead entity. Losing Joe Woody as our primary contact from Rural Development resulted in fragmented assistance from RD: instead of dealing with one person, we now deal with a number of individuals at the local and state level which often results in duplication. We are working together to get through the bumps of this transition.

The new board rules have caused considerable difficulty in reorganization of our board. We are hopeful that this will be resolved with the election of new board members, but we are skeptical that the process outweighs the benefits.

Another VERY difficult problem is the uncertainty of the funding for the EC. Year to year funding makes it nearly impossible to actually proactively plan well. The difficulty in getting appropriations this year for Round II EC has made many in the community skeptical about future funding. Lack of staff is always a challenge.

**Solutions:** Basically, we have responded to challenges by pulling and working together as a team in the community. The RC&D has been very patient and generous to provide cash flow for EC operations. The Clinch-Powell Community Fund has been established with \$5,000 seed money from the EC to the East Tennessee Foundation. Training has begun with the volunteer steering committee to learn fund raising and endowment tactics. The purpose of this fund is to have a growing cash stream to provide monies for scholarships and grant making. The RC&D has become a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO). This allows us to concentrate on the Clinch-Powell HOME Team with affordable housing for the region. The Neighborhood Reinvestment Institute has trained three staff members in Homebuyer Education. Providing Homebuyer Education will increase the number of qualified homebuyers. Three staff has been trained in grant writing this year. A consultant funded by the Enterprise Community who is experienced in the special needs of the rural Appalachia is providing technical assistance and active promotion of the region within the values of the Enterprise Community.

**Best Practices:** Keeping partner groups informed and working in a proactive way is the best practice. By purchasing fire- fighting equipment/gear in bulk we saved local Volunteer Fire Departments 65%. We hope others will adopt this idea of pooling resources to gain greater rewards. The Tennessee EC/EZ Coalition has great potential in sharing ideas and resources. Even if we are unable to continue to work as a coalition in terms of funding, we believe that the group can act as a idea clearing house.

**Plans/Prospects for the Future:** Plans are to continue to implement the strategic plan and to revise it as needed to accommodate the needs of the region and to continue to stay involved in the Coalition. We will have our upcoming public meetings to advertise the EC and elect new board members. We will then have new Board orientation. We will continue to fight for financial support from Congress.